UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PROGRAM..... RELEASE.....

U. S. RADIO FARM SCHOOL FIRST Wed. May 4/27.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

SHORT COURSE: Brooding and Rearing Chickens

LECTURE No.7: Separating the Sexes and Culling.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

(The characters speaking during this lecture are: The Professor himself; and Brandt and Rogers, members of the class.)

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(Three or four raps -- as if on desk)

THE PROFESSOR: The class will be in order!

Let's get down to business. As you know, taking the country as a whole, more than half the income from poultry comes from the sale of eggs.

For that reason, you should give every consideration to the development of pullets. The pullets which are to be used as layers next fall and winter.

The growing pullets should have plenty of room --- both in the houses and on the range. In order to give them room, you should separate the roosters and pullets at an early date------- Brandt!

BRANDT: Here!

THE PROFESSOR: Brandt, how many chicks do your brooder houses hold?

BRANDT: 200 to 300 chicks apiece.

THE PROFESSOR: How many half-grown chickens do you keep in such a house?

BRANDT: Oh, about the same number.

THE PROFESSOR: Do you have much trouble with colds and diseases?

BRANDT: Well, I had a good deal last year.

THE PROFESSOR: It's not surprising! A house big enough for 300 chicks is not nearly big enough for the same number of half-grown chickens. With the increase in the body size of the chicks, there's danger of overcrowding. You should know --- all of you here should know --- overcrowded houses are extremely dangerous. Especially so, during the warm nights in the summer.

The air in the house is liable to get damp and stuffy. The chicks are

liable to sweat. They may not only fail to grow properly --- but often, as a result of overcrowding they are so weakened that they are much more susceptible to colds and diseases ------(As if interrupted) Well, Rogers, what is it?

ROGERS: You said we should separate the growing roosters and pullets, to prevent overcrowding -------

THE PROFESSOR: Yes?

ROGERS: When would you do that? How old should they be?

THE PROFESSOR: Well, the proper time to separate the sexes depends, of course, on the breed and on the rate they are growing. That is largely determined by inheritance and the conditions under which you raise them -----

ROGERS: I mean under average conditions ------

THE PROFESSOR: Leghorn males should be separated from the females at from about 10 to 12 weeks of age.

General-purpose breeds, such as Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, and Wyandottes, should be separated at from 12 to 14 weeks of age.

BRANDT: Professor, how about Brahmas and Jersey Black Giants? They should be separated later still, shouldn't they?

THE PROFESSOR: Yes, in the case of such other large breeds as those, which mature much later, it would be all right to leave the males with the females up to about 16 to 18 weeks of age.

ROGERS: What would you do with the roosters, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: In many cases, you can sell them as broilers. At the time the sexes are separated, the males may often be sold as broilers to excellent advantage.

ROGERS: Broilers?

THE PROFESSOR: Yes, chickens weighing from 1/2 to 2 pounds each. If yours are of good stock, and if they have been managed and fed properly, they should reach that weight by the time they are from 10 to 12 weeks old.

One advantage of disposing of surplus cockerels as broilers is that they are sold when there is practically no other poultry on the market. Consequently, early broilers should bring a good price. If you do not sell them as broilers when you separate them from the pullets, you can still keep them separate and later sell them as fryers. Or, if you keep them until the fall of the year, when prices are usually good, you can sell tham as roasters.

ROGERS: Professor, is there any advantage of separating them, except to make more room for the pullets.

THE PROFESSOR: Well, of course, that's one of the most important reasons. As the chicks get to be from 10 to 15 weeks old, depending, of course, on the breed, the males have a tendency to annoy the females. Not only that, but one very distinct advantage of keeping the male birds by themselves is that they will grow and fatten better than when they are kept with the females.

Separating the growing chicks at an early date according to sex gives both the male and the female chicks the best opportunity for growth. That means increasing the chances of getting more for them -- of increasing their meat and egg-producing capacity.

BRANDT: How would you feed them, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: The young stock?

BRANDT: Yes, sir. I want to know a good mash for them.

THE PROFESSOR: Well, now, Brandt, that's a little off the present subject. We'll take that up next week. For the present, however, I want you to get in your head, the importance of separating the sexes at a fairly early date. And I want you to remember that half-grown chickens need more range and house space than the same number of young chicks. Avoid overcrowding. It's dangerous.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PROGRAM: U. S. RADIO FARM SCHOOL — SECOND RELEASE: Wed. May 4, 192'

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

SHORT COURSE: Spring Problems in Poultry Management

LECTURE No.7: Marketing Broilers.

ANNOUNCEMENT: If you haven't received one of those sets of 216 free booklets in connection with the Radio Farm School, you can get them by asking for them through this station. We will be glad to pass your name along to the United States Department of Agriculture which prepares this material. I just mention that in passing. The second talk in the Poultry School tonight will be about marketing broilers.

(The characters speaking during this lecture are: The Professor himself; and Hamilton and Stevens, members of the class.)

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HAMILTON: Hey, Stevens! I missed that. What's the Prof. going to talk about?

STEVENS: About marketing broilers.

HAMILTON: Good! I could use a whole coop full of information on that subject.

STEVENS: Huh! --- You've been selling chickens for years. You ought to know all about that -- by this time.

HAMILTON: Yes, but they keep hatching new ideas in this chicken business. You know nowdays they're selling a lot of winter and early spring broilers. They say there's money in it, too.-------

STEVENS: Speaking of broilers, Hamilton, what's the best way to sell 'em?

HAMILTON: You can get the best prices if you dress 'em and sell 'em direct to the consumer.

But, of course, most broilers are marketed alive. I ship mine either to the market poultry dealers or direct to hotels and meat markets.

STEVENS: How do you ship 'em?

HAMILTON: In a regular wooden or wire shipping coop. You know the kind. They hold about 20 to 22 chickens ----

STEVENS: Some days of the week are better for selling them than others, aren't they?

HAMILTON: Yes, in most markets. Of course, that depends on the market. You want to ship them as fast as possible -- so as to cut down the shrinkage during shipping. I always try to ship mine so they'll reach market early in the morning. That's usually the best time.

STEVENS: Well, say -- about dressing them -- how do you do that? Of course, I know how we do it at home -- but this is my first season with chickens for market.

HAMILTON: Well, chickens you're going to dress for market -- ought to have empty crops when you kill 'em. Don't give them any solid food for 24 hours before the killing. But give them plenty of water.

STEVENS: Sure, I know that. I mean do you scald pick 'em or dry pick 'em?

HAMILTON: Well, we dry pick ours. Some markets don't take any other kind. And then, dry picking makes a nicer looking broiler. It's more particular work, though

STEVENS: That's what I thought. Just how do you do it?

HAMILTON: First, I hang up the chicken at a convenient height for picking. Then I cut its jugular vein -- in the throat just below the base of the skull-------

STEVENS: Is that the way you'd kill 'em for scald picking too?

HAMILTON: Yes. But for scald picking, I stun 'em by a blow on the back of the head with a club, before I bleed them. Some folks stick a knife in the base of the chicken's brain through its mouth.

When I scald pick 'em, I always plump 'em by dipping them first in hot water and then in cold water as soon as they are picked.

STEVENS: Yes, I know all that. What I don't get is how you get the feathers out in dry picking.

HAMILTON: The whole trick of that is to stick 'em so you loosen the muscles that hold the feathers.

STEVENS: How you mean?

HAMILTON: Just as soon as you've made the cut for bleeding, you plunge the point of the knife right through the roof of the mouth into the brain. That does the work.

Of course, whether you scald them or dry pick them, you should cool them as soon after picking as possible -------

(Three or four raps -- as if on desk)

THE PROFESSOR: Order in the classroom! ---

I want to tell you how to improve the market condition of your broilers.

Give them a fattening ration for 2 or 3 weeks before marketing. You can fatten them in a pen or in a crate. Broilers, you know, will weigh about 2 pounds when they are from 9 to 13 weeks old ----

STEVENS: Professor, what would you fatten them on?

THE PROFESSOR: Make a fattening mash of 3 parts by weight of corn meal and one part of middlings. Feed the mash with skim milk or buttermilk.

However, fattening is most profitable for broilers which are dressed and sold direct to the consumer. (As if interrupted) Well, Hamilton, what is it?

HAMILTON: They tell me that early broilers coming on the market in February and March bring almost twice as much per pound as those we market in the summer and fall.

THE PROFESSOR: That's right. Prices decline rapidly during the spring months.

HAMILTON: How do they get the broilers on the market that soon?

THE PROFESSOR: By feeding and brooding them indoors.

HAMILTON: I never could grow them successfully in the brooder house.

THE PROFESSOR: You could if you used the improved methods of feeding and broodin

HAMILTON: What are those methods? That's just what I wanted to ask about.

THE PROFESSOR: Well, you can grow chickens for market while they are still in the brooder house, by adding cod-liver oil to the ration and by supplying yellow corn meal and the proper minerals.

HAMILTON: I've heard that cod-liver oil makes the chickens taste like cod-fish. The dealers object to chickens fed with it.

THE PROFESSOR: Maybe so. But you can get around that, all right. Just leave the cod-liver oil out of the ration 2 weeks before you market the broilers. Then they will go on the market free from that objectionable flavor.

HAMILTON: I'm going to try that next spring.

STEVENS: Professor, capons bring higher prices than other chickens don't they?

THE PROFESSOR: Oh, yes. But we talk about that next week. Next week will be the last class this season. We'll devote the period to capons and caponizing.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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PROGRAM U. S. RADIO FARM SCHOOL FIRST RELEASE Wed. May 11/27.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

SHORT COURSE: Brooding and Rearing Chickens.

LECTURE No. 8: Feeding the Young Stock.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The United States Radio Farm School is letting out for the season. After this evening, the poultry classes on which you have been listening in since last September, will discontinue until next Fall. The concluding lesson in the short course on brooding and rearing chickens will be on the subject of feeding the young stock.

(The characters speaking during this lecture are: The Professor himself, and Newton and Godfrey, members of the class.)

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(Three or four raps -- as if on desk)

THE PROFESSOR: The class will be in order!

This will be our last evening together for some time.

Your vacation from the Poultry School starts to-night -- but you will all, no doubt, be plenty busy with your chickens.

I'm wishing you a most successful summer.

I hardly suppose it is necessary to caution you to provide shade for the chickens on the range or in the yard. Plenty of shade, you know, is necessary during the summer months.

Your chicken coops and houses should be well ventilated during warm weather. You should have openings both in the front and back of the houses. Keep the houses clean and free from insect pests. Give the chickens plenty of clean water and keep the water in the shade in hot weather.

Always keep fine oyster shell and grit before the growing chickens. You should feed young chickens so that they will grow fast and steadily -- without any setbacks.

Regulate the feed so the pullets will develop big, strong frames and mature early in the fall. Liberal feeding is necessary for proper development. It gives the best returns. There is little danger of overfeeding growing chickens that are on range.

Also see that they have plenty of coop space; to take care of the rapid chick growth and prevent overcrowding. ------

Now then, if any of you here have any questions, just speak up. ------- All right, Godfrey, what is it?

GODFREY: What is a good home-mixed mash for growing chickens?

THE PROFESSOR: If you have your pencil handy there, just take this down: (Slowly) Head it "Growing Mash" ------- 4 parts yellow corn meal; 2 parts bran; 1 1/2 parts middlings; 1 part rolled oats; 1 1/4 parts meat scrap and 1/4 part bone meal.

GODFREY: How often would you feed it?

THE PROFESSOR: Just keep the growing mash before the chicks all the time. Keep the mash in hoppers and the hoppers in the yards, if possible. Examine the hoppers each day to see that plenty of fresh feed is always before the chickens.

GODFREY: What sort of scratch feed would you give them?

THE PROFESSOR: You can make a good scratch feed with equal parts wheat and yellow cracked corn---- (As if interrupted) Well, Newton?

NEWTON: Would you feed the chicks cod-liver oil?

THE PROFESSOR: It's not necessary -- if they have good outside range. But, if you have to keep them closely confined or if you don't have plenty of green feed for them, you should feed one pint of cod-liver oil in every 100 pounds of feed. The best chicks, however, are raised on open grass range.

NEWTON: Milk is good for chicks, too, isn't it, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: Yes, it is. It makes an excellent addition to all chick rations. You can hasten chick growth materially by using milk; either as a drink or by mixing it in the mash. It tends to cut down the chick death rate and also helps prevent toe-picking and other bad habits among the chicks. The larger the flock, the greater the danger of picking and crowding.

GODFREY: How big should the flock be, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: Well, 300 to 400 chicks is a good size for a brooder flock. Allowing for some mortality, that will leave 125 to 150 pullets, after you've taken out the cockerels.

GODFREY: When would you separate them?

THE PROFESSOR: When they are about twelve to fifteen weeks old. The smaller breeds are separated earlier than the larger breeds.

NEWTON: You'd sell the cockerels for broilers, wouldn't you, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: Yes, that's a good idea. Or you can keep them until fall and sell

them as roasters.

NEWTON: How much feed does it take to grow a chick to broiler size?

THE PROFESSOR: It takes about 10 pounds of feed to produce a 2 pound Leghorn broiler, but only about 5 1/2 pounds for a 2 pound Plymouth Rock. The bigger breeds bring the best returns as broilers.

NEWTON: Why's that, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: Well, it usually takes about 14 weeks to grow a Leghorn cockerel to 2 pounds. It takes about 11 weeks to grow a 2 pound Rhode Island Red. You can grow a 2 pound Plymouth Rock in 10 weeks.

GODFREY: There's also a difference in the time it takes pullets of different breeds to mature, isn't there, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: Certainly. It will vary with the breed, and the time of hatching and with the season. Ordinarily, however, pullets should be of good size and ready to start laying early next fall.

GODFREY: Suppose they don't mature fast enough for that?

THE PROFESSOR: You can speed them up a bit by feeding a moist mash mixed with milk once a day -- in addition to the regular dry mash.

NEWTON: How about those that mature too fast? Sometimes they start laying, lay a few eggs, then go into a molt and quit laying just at the time egg prices are highest.

THE PROFESSOR: Yes, that's true, Newton. And not only that, when they are forced too fast and start to lay when they are 4 or 5 months old, the pullets are inclined to be small and to lay small eggs.

But if you notice they're maturing too fast in the late summer, you can slow down the process.

NEWTON: How?

THE PROFESSOR: By feeding less mash and more scratch feed. Or by reducing the quantity of meat scrap or protein in their mash.

By the time they start laying, however, we'll be back in school. In the meantime, I wish you all a most successful summer. All those who do not have a class in the spring problems in poultry management, which follows this, may go now, and good luck to you.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

PROGRAM U. S. Radio Farm School. SECOND RELEASE Wed., May 11/27

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

SHORT COURSE: Spring Problems in Poultry Management.

LECTURE No. 8: Capons and Caponizing.

ANNOUNCEMENT: For the manyeth and last time this season, let me call your attention to the free booklets issued by the United States Department of Agriculture in connection with its Radio Farm School. The Farm School material you have heard broadcast through this station can be had in printed form for handy reference if you will just send us in your name.

(The characters speaking during this lecture are: The Professor himself; and Martin and Tate, members of the class.)

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(Two sharp raps -- as if on desk)

THE PROFESSOR: Members of the class will please find seats!

Kenney -- you and Bruce may be restless; but, if you'll just settle down for a few minutes, we'll soon be through.

This is our last class, remember. Before we adjourn for the summer, however, I have something more to say about chicken meat.

In composition and food value, chicken compares favorably with other lean meats. Not only that, it's easily digested. So much so, it's considered particularly suitable for invalids and children.

A most distinctive looking and delicately flavored chicken is the capon. The capon is to the poultry dealer what the fat steer is to the beef packer -- the source of the choicest food product in mature poultry.------

MARTIN: Does it pay to grow capons?

THE PROFESSOR: Well, Martin, I'd say it does. On a general farm, such as you have, where there is plenty of range, to provide ideal growing conditions -- and where you have a home-grown supply of feed, the growing of capons is a sound and profitable side-line. The capons will not only provide you with fresh meat of the best quality for your home table, but you can usually sell the surplus in your local market at good prices.

MARTIN: How do the prices run? --- Compared to other chickens?

THE PROFESSOR: That, of course, varies with the market. The average prices per pound for chickens on the New York market last year ---- I have the figures right here somewhere -------- Here they are ------

Old cocks averaged 21.80 cents per pound; fowls brought 29.23 cents per pound; roasters 32.73 cents; fryers 32.94 cents; while capons averaged 41.23 cents per pound. So you see, the quality of capon meat is recognized and appreciated.

TATE: Big capons usually bring the best prices, don't they, Professor?

THE PROFESSOR: Yes, they do, Tate. For that reason, it's important to use a large breed and grow the birds out well. Capons on the New York market last year ranged in price from about 30 cents a pound for the small ones to more than 50 cents a pound for the largest size and best quality.

TATE: What breeds are the best to use?

THE PROFESSOR: Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds, White Wyandottes, Light Brahmas, Jersey Black Giants, Indian Games, make good capons. Yellow skin and legs add attractiveness. Some of the English breeds, such as the Orpington make good capons, except that white skin and legs are not in favor in this country. In New England, they formerly used the Light Brahma extensively in crosses with White and Barred Rocks. Nowadays, however, vigorous strains of Rocks have almost entirely supplanted the crossbreds.

MARTIN: What's the best time to operate on the cockerels to make capons out of them?

THE PROFESSOR: When they are from 2 to 3-1/2 months old. That's the reason I brought up the subject of caponizing at this time. The capons are usually not marketed until Christmas. Often they are held until January, February or March. But it takes about 10 months to grow and finish a capon properly. For that reason, it's important to hatch the chicks in early spring; so they will be the proper size for caponizing in June, July, and August.

But you should be sure to starve the cockerels for 24 to 36 hours before the operation.

MARTIN: Would you keep water away from them too?

THE PROFESSOR: It's not really necessary.

TATE: Professor, isn't there danger of killing them in operating on them?

THE PROFESSOR: Oh, yes. Even experts are sure to kill some birds. But the loss is small. It seldom goes over 5 per cent where any considerable number are caponized. Usually, it's not more than 2 or 3 per cent. With beginners, of course, the percentage is larger. But with a little practice and care,

you soon learn how to operate. Any chickens killed in the operation are perfectly good to eat, so they are not wasted.

MARTIN: What would you feed capons?

THE PROFESSOR: Well, if you want the fastest, most economical growth, just give them a good growing ration and the freedom of a green range. During the last month or six weeks, before you market them, add more yellow corn to the mash, until the capons are on a full fattening ration. Probably the most practical place to feed them is on the range where they've been raised.

TATE: Would you dress them for market the same way you do other chickens?

THE PROFESSOR: Of course, you should leave the head on. Also all the head, neck and tail feathers, and part of the back and wing feathers -- so they can be readily distinguished from other classes of poultry. The carcass should be dry-picked; and you should be very careful not to tear the skin in picking. A fattened capon won't bring the highest price, unless the carcass is dressed according to trade standards----- and unless it has that smooth, plump, yellow-skinned outside that the trade prefers.

Before you ship, cool the carcasses thoroughly to entirely remove the animal heat. You can pack them in barrels or in boxes --- one dozen to the box.

TATE: Professor, are there more capons raised now than there used to be?

THE PROFESSOR: Undoubtedly.

TATE: If many more of us raise capons, isn't there danger the demand will slack up?

THE PROFESSOR: Well, if we can judge by the past, the keen demand for fat capons in the city markets will continue to grow -- with the increased purchasing power of the buying public.

Capon production is a profitable farm sideline. I have called your attention to it as one of the means by which many of you may increase your poultry profits.

I wish you all success with your chickens. Next fall, I hope, we can all get together by radio and again talk over the poultry problems which may arise in the meantime. Good-bye and good luck.

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